

Currently, consumers are less than sovereign in the education "market." Funding decisions are increasingly controlled by the federal government. Because "he who pays the piper calls the tune," public, and even private schools, are paying greater attention to the dictates of federal "educrats" while ignoring the wishes of the parents to an ever-greater degree. As such, the lack of consumer sovereignty in education is destroying parental control of education and replacing it with state control.

Loss of control is a key reason why so many of America's parents express dissatisfaction with the educational system. According to a recent study by The Polling Company, over 70% of all Americans support education tax credits! This is just one of numerous studies and public opinion polls showing that Americans want Congress to get the federal bureaucracy out of the schoolroom and give parents more control over their children's education.

Today, Congress can fulfill the wishes of the American people for greater control over their children's education by simply allowing parents to keep more of their hard-earned money to spend on education rather than force them to send it to Washington to support education programs reflective only of the values and priorities of Congress and the federal bureaucracy.

The \$3,000 tax credit will make a better education affordable for millions of parents. Mr. Speaker, many parents who would choose to send their children to private, religious, or parochial schools are unable to afford the tuition, in large part because of the enormous tax burden imposed on the American family by Washington.

The Family Education Freedom Act also benefits parents who choose to send their children to public schools. Although public schools are traditionally financed through local taxes, increasingly, parents who wish their children to receive a quality education may wish to use their credit to improve their schools by helping financing the purchase of educational tools such as computers or extracurricular activities such as music programs. Parents of public school students may also wish to use the credit to pay for special services for their children.

Greater parental support and involvement is surely a better way to improve public schools than funneling more federal tax dollars, followed by greater federal control, into the public schools. Furthermore, a greater reliance on parental expenditures rather than government tax dollars will help make the public schools into true community schools that reflect the wishes of parents and the interests of the students.

The Family Education Freedom Act will also aid those parents who choose to educate their children at home. Home schooling has become an increasingly popular, and successful method, of educating children. According to recent studies, home schooled children outperform their public school peers by 30 to 37 percentile points across all subjects on nationally standardized achievement exams. Home schooling parents spend thousands of dollars

annually, in addition to the wages forgone by the spouse who forgoes outside employment, in order to educate their children in the loving environment of the home.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, this bill is about freedom. Parental control of child rearing, especially education, is one of the bulwarks of liberty. No nation can remain free when the state has greater influence over the knowledge and values transmitted to children than the family.

By moving to restore the primacy of parents to education, the Family Education Freedom Act will not only improve America's education, it will restore a parent's right to choose how best to educate one's own child, a fundamental freedom that has been eroded by the increase in federal education expenditures and the corresponding decrease in the ability of parents to provide for their children's education out of their own pockets. I call on all my colleagues to join me in allowing parents to devote more of their resources to their children's education and less to feed the wasteful Washington bureaucracy by supporting the Family Education Freedom Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for rollcall vote No. 28 on February 25, 1999, I would have voted "yea" on final passage of the Wireless Privacy Enhancement Act.

HONORING FIRE MARSHAL J.J. PRUITT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues in Congress to join me in paying tribute to an outstanding individual, Fire Marshal J.J. Pruitt. J.J. will retire after nearly a half-century of fighting and investigating fires.

J.J. began his career in 1950 when he entered the Houston Fire Department. He soon distinguished himself among his colleagues and all who encountered him through his selflessness, courage, and quick thinking in the most serious of circumstances.

J.J.'s years of distinguished service lead him to a position of responsibility and leadership at the head of Harris County's Fire Marshal's Office. As Marshal, J.J. oversaw a \$1.3 million annual budget, seventeen employees, and 29 full-time volunteer departments. He led his office in planning and coordination of fire prevention and control services in the unincorporated areas of Harris County and investigated arson.

J.J.'s decision to retire is definitely a blow to the Harris County community. His almost fifty years of dedicated service will leave a legacy for future fire marshals. Those people who have had the opportunity to work with J.J. are very fortunate to have benefitted from his leadership and courageous devotion to saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Fire Marshal J.J. Pruitt for his service to Harris County. Those of us who know J.J. are truly grateful for his leadership and wish him well in all his future endeavors.

STERNBERG MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the dedication of Dr. Edward H. Hammond on the occasion of the opening to the new Sternberg Museum of Natural History on the Fort Hays State University Campus in Hays, Kansas.

In the early 1990's, Fort Hays State University President Edward H. Hammond made the commitment to raise the funds necessary to move the impressive Sternberg fossil collection to an equally impressive facility. After eight years and \$11 million dollars, his vision has been realized. The collection's new home is a state of the art 100,000 square foot dome and adjoining facility which will not only house the artifacts but provide a realistic journey through the world of prehistoric flora and fauna.

The Sternberg Collection has long been one of the premier collections of fossils in the world. It holds the largest collection of fossil grasses; it has the third largest collection of flying reptiles, and it's mammal collection ranks in the top 20 in North America. The Collection's volume of more than 3,750,000 artifacts and specimens ranks it the world's largest at a small university.

Dr. George M. Sternberg, an army surgeon began the collection in 1866. His sons developed a love for fossil hunting, and his son George F. eventually established his paleontology headquarters in 1927 at Kansas State Teachers College of Hays, now Fort Hays State University. George was made Curator of Geology and Paleontology and continued to manage and add to the Sternberg Collection until his retirement in 1961. In 1994, the Sternberg Collection was combined with the Museum of the High Plains under one director, Dr. Jerry Choate.

The completion of this project marks a major achievement for Fort Hays State University and the community of Hays. The new facility promises to draw scholars and curious travelers from around the globe and provide them with an exciting experience in prehistoric times. I commend University President Edward H. Hammond and Museum Director Dr. Jerry Choate for their creativity and tenacity in envisioning and completing this project. It is truly a landmark accomplishment.